



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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I would like to thank Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Zupkus and the entire membership of the Public Safety Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I am David Alexander, State Representative from the 58th District in Enfield. I am here to testify in favor of HB 5378 An Act Concerning Video Slot Machines at Certain Off-Track Betting Facilities.

I first would like to say that I am against any formal casino expansion in Connecticut. We have two casinos on sovereign Indian Reservation land in Southeastern Connecticut, and I do not think it would be prudent for Connecticut to allow for any formal casino expansion at this time. However, I am in favor of installing video slot machines in state betting facilities in Bridgeport, New Haven and Windsor Locks.

Connecticut is in competition with different states in our region and different regions of the country. We must remain competitive, or we must expect a loss in revenue and a loss in financial-growth opportunities. The installation of video slots at these three isolated state betting facilities will allow us to retain gaming revenue and to remain competitive with our neighboring states. Installing video slots in these three areas will not increase gambling, but instead it will encourage predisposed slot players to stay in Connecticut opposed to traveling to neighboring states to play.

I served on a Task Force last year led by Representative Peggy Sayers that examined this issue. What we discovered was that there are two types of people who patronage casinos. The first is a destination patron who occasionally goes to casinos to gamble but also attend events, concerts and shows. That type of person likely would not be interested in playing video slots at one of these three state betting facilities. They would likely travel to the casinos in Southeastern Connecticut or the one being built in Springfield, Massachusetts. The second patron is known as a convenience player. This person regularly patronizes casinos to play slots for instance. The convenience player does not travel to casinos for events, concerts or shows, but instead frequents casinos just to gamble. With the advent of slot facilities across our borders in New York, Rhode Island and soon in Massachusetts, many of these convenience patrons are or soon will be leaving our state to gamble elsewhere. Their journey across state lines does or will in the future result in a decrease in state revenue.

The installation of video slots in these three isolated facilities will keep many of our convenience patrons in Connecticut, and that will in turn keep revenue here in Connecticut instead of New York, Rhode Island or Massachusetts. Since a convenience patron is looking just to play slots he or she will not be attracted to the "hustle and bustle" of a conventional casino. In fact, the convenience patron would appreciate



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the convenience that comes from playing slots in these three isolated facilities, and therefore, he or she would choose not to travel out of state.

I realize that gambling addiction is real, and all efforts must be made by Connecticut to fight this. But I do not believe that adding video slots at these three isolated casinos will increase the amount of Connecticut gamblers. Instead, the installation of video slots at these three facilities will encourage those convenience patrons that are predisposed to play slots to stay in Connecticut to play. This will allow Connecticut to retain some of our gaming revenue that is currently being lost to New York and Rhode Island and soon Massachusetts with the construction of the Springfield MGM Casino. Again, as legislators we need to be mindful that we are in competition with states within our region and other regions of the country. HB 5378 allows us to remain competitive by retaining some of our gaming revenue that is expected to leave our state. Thank you. I will gladly answer any questions.